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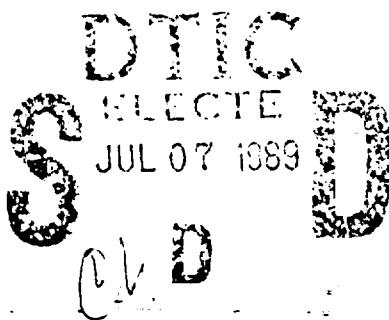
## STUDY PROJECT

### SENIOR LEADERSHIP WARTIME SKILLS

BY

LIEUTENANT COLONEL BRIAN V. PIZZANO

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## 20. ABSTRACT

Following the publication of the Army's AirLand Battle doctrine in FM 100-5 in 1982, there was a renewed interest in the art of operational warfare. Along with this interest came the recognition that a senior leadership doctrine was needed to serve as a basis for leader development and command at the highest levels of the Army. To provide the leadership doctrine to accompany the AirLand Battle warfighting doctrine, FM 22-103 was published in 1987. This study examined the skills that FM 22-103 claims are necessary for leadership and command at the senior levels in order to plan and direct the battles and campaigns discussed in FM 100-5. The study attempted to use oral histories and other sources to determine if the wartime experiences of senior leaders in World War II support the skills listed in FM 22-103. It was determined that the oral histories only marginally contributed to an investigation of warfighting skills. Biographies and other sources were also consulted. These required analysis to discern the warfighting skills necessary for senior leaders as surprisingly they have had little to say about what skills they needed.

USAWC MILITARY STUDIES PROGRAM PAPER

SENIOR LEADERSHIP WARTIME SKILLS

AN INDIVIDUAL STUDY PROJECT

By

Lieutenant Colonel Brian V. Pizzano

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# SENIOR LEADERSHIP WARTIME SKILLS

## CHAPTER I

### INTRODUCTION

Throughout history the quality of senior leadership has been a key ingredient for success on the battlefield. The future battlefield will be characterized by weapons and systems of increased complexity and lethality and will demand leadership that is even more skillful in handling men and machines. Indeed, FM 100-5 states that leadership is the most essential element of combat power.<sup>1</sup> It obviously follows, then, that the U.S. Army must produce skillful leaders to be successful on the next battlefield.

Before such leaders can be developed, however, there must be some clear idea on what kinds of skills a leader should possess. The current doctrinal answer to this question can be found in Chapter Four of FM 22-103, "Leadership and Command at Senior Levels." This chapter, titled "Skills and Success," lists and describes the skills it claims are needed to plan and direct the battles and campaigns described in FM 100-5. The question that now comes to mind is, "Does adequate wartime historical evidence exist to support the senior leader skills in FM 22-103?" The purpose of this study is to answer that question.

## BACKGROUND

In 1982, the Army formally announced the doctrine of the AirLand Battle with the publication of FM 100-5. The concepts and philosophy contained in that version of the manual were further refined and published again in 1986 in what remains the current keystone document for Army warfighting.

In addition to providing the Army with a warfighting doctrine that is a substantial departure from the previous doctrine, the AirLand Battle concept awakened an interest in the art of operational warfare. For years in the U.S. Army the focus had been on strategy and tactics, but any focus on the bridge between them (operational art) was dormant.

Along with the awakened interest in operational art came writings in professional journals and changes in school curricula. It soon became apparent there was no pool of experienced officers proficient in the large scale joint actions which characterize operational art. Lieutenant Colonel L. D. Holder, one of the authors of FM 100-5, made the following observation in an article for Army Magazine.

. . . Army leaders will have to make some fairly drastic changes in their present views. Senior officers will have to master an important subject that has been neglected for a generation and educate their juniors as they teach themselves.<sup>2</sup>

Senior officers not only had the task of teaching themselves and their subordinates about the operational concepts in 100-5, but they also needed to learn and teach themselves the



kind of leadership required to execute the concepts. They had to teach themselves because there was no Army doctrine at the time for senior level warfighting leadership. The then current doctrine on leadership, FM 22-100, "Military Leadership," did not discuss the subject at a level above company. The apparent void was addressed by Major Mitchell M. Zais in an article titled, "Is Leadership at the Top a Neglected Art?"<sup>3</sup> In this article Zais argued that leadership skills and ability change with the organizational level. Support for this point of view can be found in the following passage from Clausewitz.

. . . Ideas will differ in accordance with the commander's area of responsibility. In the lower ranks, they will be focused upon minor and more limited objectives; in the more senior, upon wider and more comprehensive ones. There are commanders-in-chief who could not have led a cavalry regiment with distinction, and cavalry commanders who could not have led armies.<sup>4</sup>

Zais goes on to argue that a senior leadership doctrine is needed to serve as a basis for formal leader development efforts and as an aid in identification of future senior leaders.

To fill the void in leadership doctrine, the Army published FM 22-103 in June 1987. The stated purpose of the manual was to establish a doctrinal framework for leadership and command at senior levels and within the context of the concepts in FM 100-5.<sup>5</sup> It was also intended for use as a guide for the development of leaders and thereby was to fulfill the other needs discussed by Zais.

## SCOPE

FM 22-103 doesn't affix any rank or organizational level to what it calls senior level leadership. For this study, however, my focus will be at the three and four-star level. We can anticipate that officers of these ranks will be the commanders executing the operational and strategic art.

Experiences from World War II will provide the principal historic sources for investigation. World War II has been chosen because its history is rich with the practice of operational art. Even though the next war will be more mobile, complex, and lethal than was the Second World War, valuable lessons can be drawn.

An attempt was made to use the oral histories on file at the Military History Institute as principal source documents. These documents proved to be unsatisfactory principal sources as leadership factors surprisingly were not a major thrust in the lines of questioning. Most of the leadership points addressed are anecdotal and do more to explain a leader's personality and ideosyncracies than anything else. Direct questions on leadership usually were broad and open-ended and elicited responses focused on attributes rather than skills.

Russell Weigley found a similar problem with the oral histories when doing research for Eisenhower's Lieutenants. He observed that the oral histories helped with general impressions but didn't contribute to specific conclusions about particular issues.<sup>6</sup> Therefore, sources other than the oral histories had to be studied to determine the wartime skills necessary for

senior level leadership. However, even in their biographies, senior leaders have had little to say about what a senior leader must know and do. The process of searching for historical evidence by which current leadership doctrine can be judged required analysis of what senior leaders had their units do in the major battles, operations, and campaigns. From the analysis of what units actually did, I have attempted to derive the leadership skills that caused those actions. There are difficulties with this kind of approach but because of the shortcomings of the oral histories, a direct approach based on the personal experience of senior leaders was not feasible.

#### ENDNOTES

1. U.S. Department of the Army, Field Manual 100-5, "Operations," p. 13.
2. LTC L. D. Holder, "A New Day for Operational Art," Army Magazine, March 1985, p. .
3. MAJ Mitchell M. Zais, "Is Leadership at the Top a Neglected Art?," Army Magazine, March 1986, p. 52.
4. Carl von Clausewitz, On War, ed. and trans. by Michael Howard and Peter Paret, pp. 145-146.
5. U.S. Department of the Army, Field Manual 22-103, "Leadership and Command at Senior Levels," p. .
6. Russell F. Weigley, Eisenhower's Lieutenants, p. XVII.

## CHAPTER II

### FM 22-103 LEADERSHIP SKILLS

According to FM 22-103, leadership skills provide the basis required to implement the commander's vision for success. From these skills spring the attributes such as boldness, determination, decisiveness and so on, which are usually used to describe the best leaders. These skills also build on the leadership tenets of knowing yourself, human nature, your job and your unit.

FM 22-103 lists 14 skills grouped in three broad categories as shown below:<sup>1</sup>

#### Professional Skills

##### Conceptual

Decision Making  
Forecasting  
Creativity  
Intuition

##### Competency

Perspective  
Endurance  
Risk Taking  
Coordination  
Assessment

##### Communications

Interpersonal  
Listening  
Language  
Teaching  
Persuasion

#### CONCEPTUAL SKILLS

Conceptual skills are required to adequately deal with complexity in an ambiguous environment. The senior leader must conceptualize the battlefield and apply his combat power with the most effective time and space relationships. Increased mobility factors for opposing forces, the porous nature of the battlefield and the need to make immediate decisions to affect later actions, are all factors demanding conceptual ability.<sup>2</sup>

### Decision Making

Decision making is listed by FM 22-103 as the most important of the conceptual skills. The concept of decision making involves more than just an individual action by the leader. It also includes providing sufficient authority to subordinates so that timely decisions can be made at the proper levels.

Also included in the skill of decision making is the ability to synthesize and analyze information. Because of the technological advances made in the information management area, this ability may be key. There is the strong possibility a leader could be overwhelmed by a flood of information if he can't select the important items and fit them together.

### Forecasting

Forecasting is what the leader intends be done over a time period to accomplish a goal. It can be viewed as a form of backward planning. The leader may envision a desired outcome and from that forecast the actions and operations that must create the outcome. This is not a process of gazing into a crystal ball but is more of an estimating process.

### Creativity

The paths and choices available to the leader in pursuit of his desired outcome are many and varied. This, along with the fact that battlefield uncertainties produce surprises, require

the leader to be creative. In this regard, he must be sufficiently flexible to apply expedient and innovative solutions to battlefield situations. Creative skills enable the leader to avoid taking the predictable course of action and to shape the battlefield to his advantage.

### Intuition

Intuitive skills assist the commander in arriving at timely and innovative decisions. This involves the rapid recognition of what is possible and what is not. This recognition will not be based on complete information nor prolonged analysis, but rather it will be based on bits of information which trigger the leader's mind.

### COMPETENCY SKILLS

Competency skills represent the knowledge and aptitude to fight units in the proper direction for success. It is possible for a leader to have reasonably well-developed conceptual and communicative skills and still not be successful because of inadequate competency. A leader must still choose a course that is right.

Competency skills enable the leader to determine what is important to his situation and then to issue orders and directives that make sense. Properly developed, these skills will prevent what Norman Dixon describes as the four most common symptoms of military incompetence: wasting manpower,

overconfidence, underestimating the enemy, and ignoring intelligence reports.<sup>3</sup>

### Perspective

Perspective skill involves understanding battlefield situations in their proper context. This includes an understanding of the situation in terms of its overall importance and effect on present and future operations. Inherent to this concept is the avoidance of focus on the trivial. Even matters which aren't trivial but represent a degree of detail that senior leaders do not need to address must be avoided.

### Endurance

Given the lethality of future battlefield and the anticipated pace of operations, heavy demands will be made on the mental and physical endurance of senior leaders. To effectively fight the AirLand Battle, leaders will need sufficient mental conditioning to cope with the stress caused by high levels of violence. A direct companion and contributor to this mental endurance is physical endurance.

### Risk Taking

Leaders must use their other skills to make bold, innovative, and well-reasoned decisions in an ambiguous environment. This is called risk taking. Risk taking is a matter of timing and of balancing potential costs against potential gains. Professional knowledge and the tenets of



leadership enable the leader to take the risks that ought to be taken.

### Coordination

Coordination is actions to improve the ability of internal and external elements to cooperate with each other. By this cooperation, a complementary effect is created so all the cooperating elements are stronger. This is particularly important as battlefield situations involving senior leaders will be joint and may be combined. Thus the efforts of different services and different nations must be brought together to achieve strength.

### Assessment

Assessment skills are necessary to determine the capabilities and limitations of an organization. From this come programs and policies to correct weaknesses and build on strengths. Assessment skills also are used to determine the "state of health" of an organization by evaluating indicators such as morale, indiscipline rates, sick call rates, troop appearance, and so on.

## COMMUNICATION SKILLS

In broad terms, this category of skills permits leaders to receive the information they need and to transmit what they want done. More importantly, communication skills that are well developed do more than transmit information; they also transmit understanding.<sup>4</sup>

Communications also have much to do with the climate in an organization. Such things as candor, openness, and confidence depend on effective communications to a large degree. The way in which a leader reacts to bad news will affect the willingness of subordinates to bring him more, for example.

### Interpersonal

Well developed interpersonal communication skills provide a means to positively influence others. In this regard, the confidence and trust that subordinates have for their leaders will be increased. The development of this skill requires a thorough understanding of self and others and an appreciation for the impact of interpersonal contact.

### Language

Language skills involve effective use of the oral and written word. As previously discussed, demands of the battlefield will require many orders and directives be given orally. A leader must be effective in this medium so his subordinates understand his intent. Similarly, his written communications must be constructed so the receiver understands what the leader wants to convey.

### Teaching

Inherent with the concept of a leader is that of a teacher. The skills, knowledge, and experience of a senior leader are what enable him to teach others. When viewed from the position that

teaching others will increase an organization's effectiveness and save lives, teaching can be seen as a duty of the leader.

### Persuasion

Persuasion skills enable a leader to overcome resistance, build a consensus and generate enthusiasm for the task at hand. This skill also helps the leader to focus and order his thought process to solve a problem. He must do this before he can persuade others by explaining his reasoning. This skill will be necessary particularly for a senior leader who operates in a joint or combined environment. In this environment, support is achieved through cooperation rather than command and therefore persuasion is especially important.

#### ENDNOTES

1. FM 22-103, p. 27.
2. T. Owen Jacobs, "The Airland Battle and Leadership Requirements," in Leadership on the Future Battlefield, ed. by James C. Hunt and John D. Blair, p. 26.
3. Norman F. Dixon, "On The Psychology of Military Incompetence," p. 400.
4. Jacobs, p. 28.

CHAPTER III  
SKILLS IN WARFIGHTING  
GENERAL

This chapter is concerned with warfighting historical evidence that can be cited to support or dispute the skills that FM 22-103 states are necessary for the senior leader. As previously stated, the principal focus is World War II, but other sources ranging from Clausewitz to contemporary works also were researched in this effort.

CONCEPTUAL SKILLS

Decision Making

There can be little argument that decision making is an integral and key component of leadership and command. Martin van Creveld describes the process of command as a cycle which, in part, is a process of gathering and processing information and making a decision. He goes on to say that 99 percent of the information gathered disappears without a trace and the remaining 1 percent may have a profound effect on operations.<sup>1</sup> The fact that a very small percentage of available information substantially affects operations places a premium on the part of decision making described by FM 22-103 as synthesis and analysis. The successful leader must be able to absorb information available and identify that which is useful.

Clearly one of the most momentous decisions of World War II was that of General Eisenhower to launch the Normandy

Invasion. By June 4, 1944, all preparations for the invasion had been completed and all was ready but still one of the toughest decisions of the war was required. The operation was to be conducted with ground forces that were not overwhelmingly powerful and therefore air superiority was essential for success. But on June 4, the weather was so bad and the predictions for the next two days were also so terrible, that any air support at all was questionable.<sup>2</sup>

Eisenhower assembled his staff and subordinate commanders on the evening of June 4 and considered all the available information. The invasion had been postponed once, and there was great temptation to do so again. After considering the latest information, Eisenhower stated,

The question is how long can you hang this operation on the end of a limb and let it hang there?. . .I am quite positive that the order must be given.<sup>3</sup>

Those words of Eisenhower demonstrate his appreciation for the timeliness aspect of decision making as he was convinced that a decision was needed at that moment. There was significant risk and the success or failure of the entire operation rested on his individual decision. With the simple words of, "OK, let's go," what history proves to be the right decision, was announced.<sup>4</sup>

The words of Winston Churchill speak not only of the correctness of the decision but also of its timeliness as the invasion caught the enemy by surprise.

In retrospect this decision rightly evokes admiration. It was amply justified by events, and was largely responsible for gaining us the precious advantage of surprise. We now know that the German meteorological officers informed their High Command that invasion on the 5th or 6th of June would not be possible owing to stormy weather, which might last for several days.<sup>5</sup>

### Forecasting

During the time that elapsed between D-Day and July 25, 1944, Allied forces made little progress. They were still contained in the Cotentin Peninsula by the Germans and General Bradley feared for ". . . a World War I-type stalemate. . . ." To solve this problem, Bradley conceived a plan for a breakout called "Operation Cobra."<sup>6</sup>

The plan called for a breakout on a very narrow front in the St. Lo area. General Montgomery was to conduct a mutually supporting operation called "Goodwood." Bradley envisioned that Operation Goodwood would draw the Germans to Montgomery, permitting Bradley's forces to break out to the south and wheel to the east. In addition to these battlefield gains, Bradley envisioned the operation would raise morale and help to smooth over ever-growing differences between Montgomery and the Americans.<sup>7</sup>

Although Operation Goodwood did not live up to expectations, it did cause the German reaction envisioned by Bradley. Von Kluge, the German commander, guessed that the major offensive was to be in Montgomery's area and he committed all of his reserves there.<sup>8</sup>

With the exception of a foolish blunder by Hitler that created the "Falaise Pocket," Operation Cobra went pretty much as

Bradley had envisioned. It points out the value of a senior leader being able to forecast what needs to be accomplished over time to achieve a desired result. The following words of Bradley are supported by history and establish the significance of "Operation Cobra."

Cobra would go down in history as the "St. Lo breakout." It was, in fact a total and smashing breakin, breakthrough and breakout, a major turning point in the war. Seven agonizing weeks had passed since D-day. All that time the terrain the weather and the tenacious German troops had kept us bottled up in the Cotentin Peninsula. But now at last we were moving out at breathtaking speed. One phase of the war on the Continent had ended, another had begun.<sup>9</sup>

### Creativity

The German generals interviewed by Liddell Hart after World War II considered Erich von Manstein to have been the best of the German commanders.<sup>10</sup> Von Manstein is best known for the "Manstein Plan" which was the plan for the German offensive on the Western Front in 1940.

In 1939 the German Army High Command (OKH) published "Operation Order Yellow." This was the plan for an offensive in the west against the British, French, Belgians, and Dutch. It called for a main effort on the German right through Holland and into northern Belgium. Supporting attacks were to be made in the center through southern Belgium and Luxemburg, and in the south through Luxemburg down to Switzerland. Manstein described the plan as follows.



The operational intention. . . might best be expressed by saying that the Anglo-French elements we expected to meet in Belgium were to be floored by a powerful straight right while our weaker left fist covered up.<sup>11</sup>

For several reasons, Manstein considered the OKH plan deficient and he created an alternative plan. The "Manstein Plan" called for a main attack in the center through the Ardennes with supporting attacks conducted by an Army group in the north and an Army Group in the south. He intended to achieve decisive results by surprising the enemy, penetrating to his rear, and then turning the flank of the Maginot Line to envelop the French Army.<sup>12</sup>

The plan developed by Manstein was a significant departure from conventional German military thoughts. Conventional thought was represented by the OKH plan which was similar to a plan used by Germany in 1914. This plan sought to take advantage of what was considered ideal terrain for tanks. Manstein's plan on the other hand, was intended to create an allied response favorable to the Germans which was reinforcement of the north flank. Liddel Hart has commented that Manstein's plan demonstrated he had shown " . . . the most imagination in grasping the potentialities of highly mobile armoured warfare . . ."<sup>13</sup>

As events turned out, the Germans did achieve surprise with the attack through the Ardennes and they did achieve victory in France. They were able to do so because the plan developed by Manstein was creative enough to take advantage of surprise and the mobility and maneuver strength of the German army.

## Intuition

In a study on generalship conducted by General Bruce Clarke (Retired), several generals credited intuition as a major factor that led them to be at the right place at the right time.<sup>14</sup> Although Clausewitz doesn't use the term "intuition" in his discussion of military genius, he is clearly talking about it in his concept of "coup d'oeil." He describes this aspect of genius as the ability that ". . .even in the darkest hour, retains some glimmerings of inner light which leads to truth. . . ." He went on to explain this was the quick recognition of a truth that the mind would ordinarily miss.<sup>15</sup>

Patton credits intuition for the success in a key engagement during the Battle of the Bulge. In that engagement, his VIII Corps was to attack in the vicinity of Neufchateau on the morning of December 29, 1944. Because two divisions were late in joining the others, the Corps commander requested a delay of one day. Patton refused the request and the attack of his forces ran directly into the flank of a German counterattack of over two divisions. If the American attack had been delayed, the German counterattack might have cut the Arlon-Bastogne corridor. Patton says he refused the delay because ". . .my sixth sense told me it [the attack] was vital."<sup>16</sup>

## COMPETENCY SKILLS

### Perspective

Because of the disposition of American forces resulting from the St. Lo breakout, Hitler believed he had an opportunity to drive the Allies back into the hedgerows of Normandy. Over the objection of his military commander, he ordered a counterattack with two armies and the key battle known as the Falaise Pocket resulted.<sup>17</sup>

The German counterattack produced a salient with a head around Mortain and the base on a line between Falaise and Argentan. This salient created what is known as the Falaise Pocket and provided an exceptional opportunity for the allies.

To take advantage of this opportunity, General Bradley proposed a plan for his forces to swing north and for Montgomery to push his army group south. A linkup was to occur at Argentan and the German forces would be enveloped and sealed in a trap.<sup>18</sup>

Because of execution problems, the operation did not accomplish all the Allies had hoped. However, German losses amounted to about 50,000 captured and 10,000 dead and significant equipment losses.<sup>19</sup>

In this operation we can see a lack of ability on the part of Hitler to keep things in perspective. He failed to understand what was possible and focused on the short term goal of a counterattack. In doing so, he forfeited the long-term

capability of having two armies available to defend on favorable terrain along the Seine River.

On the other hand, Allied leaders were quick to grasp and understand the significance of the opportunity presented to them. Bradley considered the German counterattack the "greatest tactical blunder I've ever heard of." Although all Allied objectives were not achieved, the fault was in execution, not in perspective on the part of Allied leaders.

### Endurance

Liddel Hart writes that "the mind works best when the body is quiescent--when one is totally unaware of the body. . ." He went on to explain that being young mentally was insufficient and that commanders in mobile warfare must have physical endurance under hardship.<sup>20</sup>

Clausewitz describes endurance as the prolonged resistance of the will to the blows from combat. His notion of what contributes to this prolonged resistance is rather complicated in that it stems from several factors. He believed that energy was directly related to intellectual conviction or to emotion. True endurance required the strength of character to keep powerful emotions in balance. Those who have strong emotions that are deep and concealed are the ones best able to summon the great strength necessary to clear the obstructions to activity in war.<sup>21</sup>

Patton wrote "There are more tired division commanders than there are tired divisions." He believed fatigue would cause

commanders to become pessimistic and render inaccurate assessments and reports.<sup>22</sup> This phenomenon is also reported by Manstein. He often found in visits to the fighting troops that they did not suffer from the excessive strain and diminished morale that their division headquarters reported.<sup>23</sup>

### Risk Taking

Risk taking is an often discussed subject in wartime history. Usually it is addressed as an essential part of generalship and is accompanied by the necessity of taking calculated risks and not foolish ones. For example, when Eisenhower was struggling over the decision to launch the Normandy Invasion, Bedell Smith advised, "It's a helluva gamble but it's the best possible gamble."<sup>24</sup>

Manstein credits Hitler with a certain amount of instinct for operational problems, but says that due to lack of training and experience, he lacked the confidence to accept considerable risks in the course of an operation. He cites Hitler's decision to not fully implement the Manstein Plan in 1940 as proof. Hitler was content to revert to a safe defensive posture early and allow the evacuation at Dunkirk rather than pressing the offensive.<sup>25</sup>

### Coordination

Operation Overlord has been described as probably the most complex military operation in history. This dramatic Allied victory involved the drop of more than 23,000 airborne troops and an amphibious assault of over 130,000 troops.<sup>26</sup> Additionally,

there were over 14,000 sorties flown by air forces and more than 2,700 naval vessels crossed the channel.<sup>27</sup> In addition to coordinating the efforts of the land, sea and air forces, there was also the complication of coordinating the efforts to sustain the force once ashore and to coordinate the deception plan. Evidence that all of this coordination was done well can be found in the facts that despite bad weather, the operation went pretty much as planned and with relatively light casualties. In large measure this may be attributable to the ability of Eisenhower to integrate the efforts of different allies and rival services.<sup>28</sup>

### Assessment

Making an assessment of the status and condition of their organization is a skill many senior leaders discuss. Almost to a man, they point out the necessity for the commander to see the situation himself. In most cases, that involved visiting the forward combat units and talking with subordinates. As previously discussed, Manstein found this important because his personal visits provided him information quite different from official reports. As a technique of leadership, General Collins advises, "See for yourself what's going on so you can analyze where the critical action is going to take place."<sup>29</sup> The importance of seeing things for yourself was soundly supported in General Clarke's Generalship Study. Personal visits and personal observation were cited by virtually all respondents as being essential for information gathering.<sup>30</sup>

The case of Major General Lloyd Fredendall, Commander of II Corps in North Africa, points out the importance of making

personal assessments. Fredendall habitually located his command post several miles behind the front and he rarely left it to visit units. As a result, he was not receptive to the ideas and recommendations of those who were familiar with the terrain and conditions at the front. There was little anyone could tell him and he became unaware of the true condition of his command.<sup>31</sup> These factors played a major part in Fredendall's relief.

### COMMUNICATIONS SKILLS

Communications skills provide the link between a senior leader's conceptual and competency abilities and the actions his organization should take as a consequence. Quite often, the application of these skills requires the personal presence of the leader. The way in which the leader receives and analyses information and then transmits orders and instructions can affect much more than understanding. A computer can be programmed to perform these functions. But the computer cannot do what the skilled leader can with this process. The skilled leader can transmit confidence, inspiration, hope and affection.

#### Interpersonal

The following words from Rommel point out the effect that interpersonal skills may have.

There are always moments when the commanders place is not back with his staff but up with the troops. The men tend to feel no kind of contact with a commander who, they know, is sitting somewhere in his headquarters. What they want is what might be termed a physical contact with him.<sup>32</sup>

Rommel went on to say that this physical contact worked wonders in time of panic, fatigue, or when something unexpected arose. Of course to create a positive effect, a leader cannot give signals that would reinforce those negative feelings. He must be like Bradley was when crossing the channel for the Normandy Invasion. His aide recorded in a diary that "Bradley, however, does not reveal any concern or worry whatsoever. He looks quite optimistic. . ." In fact, Bradley was concerned and was far from optimistic as he reports.<sup>33</sup>

### Listening

One of the ways a leader receives information is by listening. Norman Dixon calls this the reduction of ignorance through the acquisition of facts. He goes on to relate that for some who cannot listen, the acquisition of facts does not reduce ignorance.<sup>34</sup> This was the case at the battle for the Kasserine Pass. MG Fredendall refused to accept the reports submitted by one of his division commanders. Fredendall's preconceived ideas simply prevented him from listening. Consequently, when the division commander reported his defense untenable, Fredendall attributed the report to excessive caution. By the time Fredendall finally took some action, the division was defeated.<sup>35</sup>

In his quest to determine the factors that contribute to incompetent military leadership, Dixon advances the theory that the worst leaders are excessively authoritarian. He cites the case of Hitler who surrounded himself with sycophants, which can



be viewed as a form of nonlistening. He additionally reports that Hitler refused to accept or even listen to intelligence reports that were uncomfortable. Dixon claims the incompetent leaders like Hitler take measures to protect themselves from information that raise questions about their decisions.<sup>36</sup> By considering the effects that failure to listen had on the incompetent leaders, we can conclude that listening is an important skill for the competent leader.

### Language

The senior leaders who responded to General Clarke's survey on generalship stressed the importance of instructions that are simple, clear and brief. In this regard, the appropriate language enables the senior leader to convey his intent and avoid misunderstanding and ambiguity. A classic example of the impact of language is BG McAuliffe's response to a German demand for surrender. His one word reply of "Nuts" conveyed a spirit of boldness and determination.

The following passage about Patton does much to explain the effect of language:

Patton went on to discuss the tactics that we should employ in fighting the Germans and Italians. The point that he wanted to make was that we should avoid a direct assault on an enemy position but seek to envelop his flanks. However, in doing so, the general used terms applicable to sexual relations. He did so in a very clever manner, emphasizing the point that when one arrived in the rear of one of their positions, the Italians would invariably quickly try to switch to a new position to protect themselves, and at that moment would become vulnerable to our attack from the rear. It was not so much what he said as how he said it that

caused us to remember the point he wanted to make-- though I did feel somewhat embarrassed at times, and I sensed that some of his troops felt a bit embarrassed too. . . . Yet the general made his points, and the troops remembered them as much for the very language he used as for their content.<sup>37</sup>

### Teaching

Many of the best senior leaders are often described as teachers. Bradley writes that George C. Marshall had a great influence on him both personally and professionally. The number of future generals that were taught by Marshall at Ft. Benning is legend. Bradley relates that some flippant author has described the Marshall years at Benning as his "nursery school" for the generals of World War Two.<sup>38</sup> J. Lawton Collins writes that Marshall assigned subjects to some of those future leaders and required they provide reports during informal study sessions held in the evening at Marshall's quarters.<sup>39</sup> In this role as a teacher of future generals, Marshall's contribution to victory in World War Two started several years before the war.

### Persuasion

During the planning for the Normandy Invasion, an important disagreement developed between the British and Eisenhower over the use of airpower. Eisenhower wanted command of the strategic air forces and wanted to use them to bomb the French railroad system. His plan was to conduct an air campaign during the two months preceeding the invasion to paralyze the railroad system. The British, along with some American support, claimed the bombers didn't have the accuracy to accomplish the mission and

excessive civilian casualties would result. Eisenhower pressed his argument with Churchill to the point of threatening to resign over the issue. Though there is no evidence that Churchill considered the threat serious, it demonstrated the strength of Eisenhower's conviction on the matter and was one of the tools he used in his method of persuasion. The debate went on for two months and finally Eisenhower, with some help from Roosevelt, prevailed.

The campaign proved to be critical to the success of the invasion as the German generals said it was ruinous to their counteroffensive plans. For his part, Eisenhower has stated his insistence on this matter was his single greatest contribution to the success of the invasion.<sup>40</sup>

# ENDNOTES

1. Martin van Creveld, Command in War, p. 7.
2. Steven E. Ambrose, Eisenhower, p. 306.
3. Ibid., pp. 307-308.
4. Ibid., p. 308.
5. Winston S. Churchill, Memoirs of the Second World War,  
p. 810.
6. Omar N. Bradley and Clay Blair, A General's Life,  
p. 272.
7. Ibid., p. 278.
8. Ibid., pp. 278-279.
9. Ibid., p. 282.
10. Erich von Manstein, Lost Victories, p. 13.
11. Ibid., p. 98.
12. Ibid., pp. 104-106.
13. Liddell Hart, The German Generals Talk, p. 14.
14. ARC: Art and Requirements of Command, Vol. II, P. 79.
15. Clausewitz, p. 102.
16. George S. Patton, Jr., War As I Knew It., pp. 387-388.
17. Weigley, pp. 192-201.
18. Bradley and Blair, p. 294.
19. Weigley, p. 214.
20. Liddell Hart, Thoughts on War, pp. 220-224.
21. Clausewitz, pp. 104-107.
22. Patton, p. 354.
23. Von Manstein, pp. 189, 190.
24. Ambrose, p. 307.
25. Von Manstein, p. 125.

26. Ambrose, p. 310.
27. Weigley, p. 94.
28. Martin Blumenson and James L. Stokesbury, Masters of the Art of Command, p. 302.
29. J. Lawton Collins, Oral Histories, p. 62.
30. ARC, p. 69.
31. Blumenson and Stokesbury, pp. 268-271.
32. Ibid., p. 270.
33. Bradley and Blair, p. 244.
34. Dixon, p. 30.
35. Blumenson and Stokesbury, pp. 273-275.
36. Dixon, pp. 322, 399.
37. Bradley and Blair, p. 173.
38. Ibid., pp. 72-73.
39. J. Lawton Collins, GEN, Lighting Joe, p. 51.
40. Ambrose, pp. 286-290.

## CHAPTER IV

### CONCLUSIONS

It can be argued that an historical example can be found to support almost any hypothesis. Mindful of this, I have attempted to determine if there are significant events in warfighting history that support the skills that current doctrine claims are necessary. Moreover, if history is discounted, then we have only personal experience to draw upon. As Van Creveld puts it, history may be an inadequate tool, but it's the best one available.<sup>1</sup> Liddell Hart tells us we can only probe the mind of a commander through historical examples. In his view, the details of fighting are valueless to study in detail. What matters is a study of the psychological reactions of the commanders.<sup>2</sup>

Through the oral history program, there was an opportunity to probe the minds of commanders who exercised warfighting skills at the operational level. However, as previously stated, this was not a focus of the oral history program.

In the course of this study, I have focused on some of the events of World War II that had a significant consequence. In doing so, I have found that the senior leadership skills in FM 22-103 are supported by history.

There is one question that still gnaws at me, though; that is, are the skills contained in FM 22-103 all that are necessary to be a good senior leader? Are there any others?

The approach of this study was to consider each of the skills individually and seek evidence of their value. There was no attempt to make a correlation between the skills. After considering wartime skills in some depth, I suspect there may be one overarching skill that is necessary; that involves the ability to apply several skills simultaneously and with each receiving proper weight. I would use an FM 100-5 term and call this skill synchronization. Synchronization would be the simultaneous application of several skills to produce the optimum mix of battlefield elements to create maximum strength at the right place and time. The question whether such a skill or others are necessary for warfighting is, however, beyond the scope of this study and may perhaps be the subject of others.

## ENDNOTES

1. Van Creveld, p. 14.
2. Hart, pp. 218-219.



## CHAPTER V

### RECOMMENDATIONS

Even though the opportunity to probe the minds of the senior leaders of World War II has now passed us by, the oral history program can still make a valuable contribution to the study of leadership. The program continues to obtain oral histories from retired and serving senior leaders. It is not possible to obtain their thoughts on leadership skills based on wartime experience with the AirLand Battle concepts at the operational or strategic level. It is, however, possible to benefit from their thinking on the skills required for senior leaders to practice the operational art. Moreover, these leaders have participated in war games, command post exercises and other fora where they have gained some insights concerning warfighting leadership at the senior level of command.

To benefit from the thinking of senior leaders on these matters, the interviewer must focus on what a senior leader needs to know and do to execute the concepts of the AirLand battle. There will probably be a tendency for the interviewee to discuss what a leader should be rather than what he should know or do. As previously discussed, however, a focus on the attributes of a leader (what he should be) falls short of explaining the skills necessary for warfighting. Additionally, the interviewer must avoid a focus on the leadership skills that are necessary for management of an installation or management of the Army. Many of

these skills are only casually related to those necessary to warfighting.

I recommend that the Military History Institute continue the oral history program but alter the interview process to develop the thoughts of senior leaders on warfighting skills necessary to execute the AirLand Battle.

I also recommend that the U.S. Army Combined Arms Center investigate the possibility that there is an overarching warfighting skill. This skill would involve the ability to simultaneously apply several skills to produce the mix of battlefield elements as discussed in Chapter IV. This investigation could be done as part of the normal review process for FM 22-103.

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